

Your path to wellbeing



BELIEVE
IN GOOD

15-21 October

Right now, in Australia, there are millions of people who are:

- Anxious about where their next meal will come from
- Worrying about how to pay the rent or mortgage
- Fretting about clothing their children for school
- Afraid their electricity or gas will be cut off

The Poverty in Australia 2023: Who is affected report, revealed the staggering statistic that in 2019-20, more than one in eight people, or over three million Australians, lived below the poverty line after taking account of their housing costs. This includes 761,000 children. (Source: <https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/poverty-in-australia-2023-who-is-affected/>)

In May 2023, three quarters of Australians (75 per cent) reported experiencing elevated distress driven by social and economic circumstances, including financial challenges like increased interest rates, mortgage rates and cost of living expenses. (Source: The Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker, <https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Jun.SPACT.Overview.pdf>)

Increasingly, people are living with family stress, anxiety and lack of security.

What difference can the Christian faith make to our wellbeing in times of financial stress?

God's Word reminds us that we are shaped by where we focus our attention and time. God has provided a range of people and resources to help us live well in his world.

Even in the hard and difficult times of life, there are things we can do to improve our wellbeing. When we focus our attention on good, positive things, this can shift our mood and feelings. **Here are FIVE practical steps to help our wellbeing in times of financial stress:**

1. Seek help for your financial stress by contacting Salvos services like Moneycare and Doorways. God has raised up services and people to alleviate your stress with very practical and wise support and help. You are not alone and need not face the challenges of financial stress on your own.

2. Spend time noticing God's good gifts in creation. Go for a walk and thank God for the sunset, the sky, the trees and flowers, the ocean, and the birds. A little exercise and time intentionally attending to good and beautiful things can shape our thinking and lift our wellbeing.

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matthew 6:25-27)

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3. Connect with supportive people. A coffee and conversation with a listening friend is valuable. The Harvard Study of Adult Development has found that a key to wellbeing is warm, nurturing relationships. Good relationships make us healthier and happier. Meeting with God's people can help us share the burdens of life with others.

² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

4. Reflect on God's Word and promises of hope. Stress and poor mental health can shrivel hope. However, when God's Word says that nothing can separate us from the love of God – it means that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God! Taking time to meditate on God's mercy, grace, generosity and love for us can put our financial stress into a different perspective. It does not take away the financial stress or pressure, but it reminds us that our worth and value is grounded in God's love for us and we are not alone in life.

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

5. Contact your doctor. Your local doctor is an important person to see if you are experiencing ongoing stress and mental health challenges. Again, God provides trained and qualified people to help us in difficult times.

Prayer

Loving God, thank you for loving, caring for and valuing each of us.

We ask a special blessing over anyone experiencing financial stress and pressure.

Protect and provide for their needs. Help them to seek support.

We ask that you help us to be a generous community where people can find hope and care.

Generous Lord, you have created a world that is rich and full of life.

Help us to remember that you are a generous God and that we can be generous to others.

We thank you for our Doorways and Moneycare staff who work to support people in our community.

Give them wisdom and love for the people they serve. In Jesus' name, Amen.